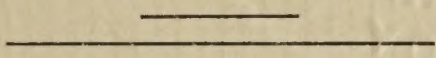
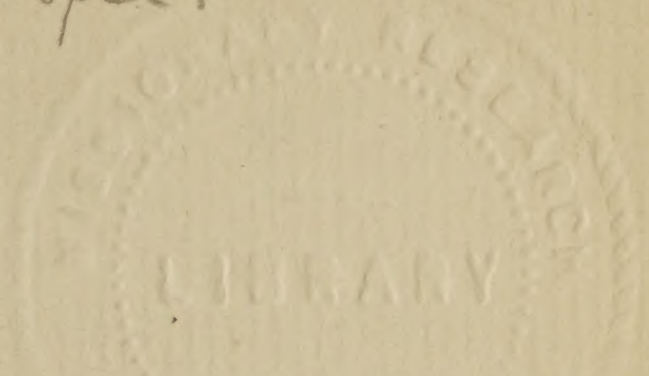


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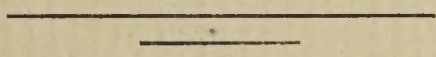
Student Volunteer Series, No. 4.

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The Volunteer Mission
Band.



THE MISSION BAND OF
THE STUDENT VOL-
UNTEER MOVEMENT FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS.



BY

ROBERT E. SPEER.

October, 1890.

THE VOLUNTEER MISSION BAND.

The necessity of association in the King's service was learned long ago. Saul had his band of men whose hearts God had touched. The Lord Jesus did His Father's work by means of the little company of followers given to Him out of the world. "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands." It is clear from the nature of the task given us as missionary voluntèers, from the ends to be attained, and from the experience of the Student Volunteer Movement in the four years of its life, that it pleases our Father to see His chosen messengers banded to accomplish the results which will glorify him in the dark lands. It is the purpose of this pamphlet to suggest some ways in which volunteers in each school and college and seminary may help the missionary cause during their days of preparation.

It is a striking but natural fact that in the colleges where this Movement has been presented and where recruits have been enlisted, if no Band has been formed, the missionary spirit has waned, and the recruits have become cold and alienated.

The Volunteer Mission Band is composed naturally of those students in any institution who have signed the pledge of the Volunteer Movement. Any other students wishing to attend the meetings are, of course, welcomed. The model Band is a quiet, unpretentious organization of the volunteers for the purpose of arousing and maintaining a personal missionary spirit, and leading others to pray and give and go. For this purpose no cumbrous organization is necessary, a leader, a chairman, or a small committee, being quite sufficient. The Band will, of course, be kept closely allied with and under the control of the Christian organization in which the religious life of the students is expressed. The missionary committees of the Young Men's and the Young Women's Christian Associations, the usual form of organization, should be composed, if possible, of volunteers, and should have as one of their duties the maintenance of the Band. It is well for the leader of the Band to be chairman of one of these committees. (1) This alliance of the Band with the Association secures *permanency*. If the Band is independent, the Association will naturally turn

over to it the responsibility for the missionary work of the college. It is fair to infer from experience in many cases where Bands have been formed that, unless further inspiration from without is brought in, when the original members are graduated the Band dies, with the result that the missionary work that has been handed over to it is abandoned because the Association has become accustomed to neglect it. If the Band is allied to the Association the missionary work is of necessity permanent, because joined to the other branches of Christian work which last as long as there is any active Christian life. (2) This alliance prevents misunderstanding and jealousy, and places the missionary work where it belongs — side by side with the work next us. (3) In this way the Band will reach and interest a larger body of students. Moreover, only so will the Association have the blessing promised those who obey the King's command and run to do His will.

The Band should have meetings weekly or fortnightly. These meetings should not be too long, nor yet too short. Ordinarily, a meeting an hour in length is preferable.

A half hour meeting each week is better than an hour meeting every other week. Where the students have specially hard work there may be difficulty in finding time ; but for the Lord's sake a quiet hour can be found, it makes no difference if it is an unusual hour, in which the volunteers may confer together and sit still with Him.

Three things need special attention in these meetings. (a) The leaders or speakers should be prepared to do what would please Him who is to be the guest at each Band gathering. They should thoroughly study and pray over the subject. (b) The prayers should be definite and believing. God's work moves so fast that we ought to have fresh thanksgiving and petition for Him every week. Let men, fields, and objects be prayed for by name. (c) The subjects for such meetings are endless. Those about to be suggested might profitably be used also in the regular monthly missionary meetings of the Association, which it is the duty of the missionary committee to arrange.

1. *Fields.* Taking China, for example, as the field, one speaker would tell of

the climate, geography of the land, customs and habits of the people, the religious beliefs, the history and government,— of all the things which ought to be of interest to every one who loves the lost millions in China. A second speaker would describe the Christian work done there, its origin,— when, by whom, how, what motives led to it, what moving of God's pillar,— what methods had been employed, and with what success, how God has glorified himself and made bare the strong right arm of His power in China. Let a third speak of the present need, the crisis, the outlook, the coming glory. A map hung up to show the land and the places to which reference is made will add greatly to the interest of the meeting. Such maps can be secured from certain Boards,— American Board, Methodist Episcopal Board, etc.,— or can be made by volunteers. A map of the world can be obtained from Funk & Wagnalls. In a year, taking up the fields in this way, any Band can traverse the globe, and every volunteer who has made the journey will wish the other volunteers all the pleasure he received from the exploration.

2. *Biographies.* No more interesting subjects can be found than lives of men like Carey, Martyn, Livingstone, Hannington, Moffat, Duff, Paton, Williams, Xavier, etc. As much care should be used by the writer of such a life for the Band as would be used were he writing for the best periodical in the land. Facts concerning fields and points in missionary work can best be understood and remembered by associating them in this way with a life. As a rule, reading from books and magazines should not be tolerated in these meetings. We can read them any time. This meeting is a time to find and keep immortal impressions. If a field is made the subject of one meeting, some life spent in that field might well be made the theme of the next meeting.

3. *Methods and Kinds of Work* will furnish comprehensive subjects. At least six might be considered: evangelistic, educational, medical, woman's, Association, opportunities for unordained workers — lay preachers, professional men, tradesmen, engineers, etc. All these should be studied in their principles and their results, their aim and real spirit, the last five especially in

their bearing upon the first. Many men who do not intend to enter the ministry would gladly serve God in some of these other ways in the large untouched places of heathenism.

4. *Boards and their Needs.* The history of organized missionary work is a fascinating study. Moreover, everywhere there is great ignorance concerning the character and work and needs of the missionary Boards. The Band should study all these things and publish them abroad.

5. Once a month a meeting might be devoted to a review of the missionary periodicals of the month. To each of the ten most prominent missionary magazines one volunteer might be assigned, to report the general spirit, the names of articles which all should read, and any items of interest. If each of these ten should contribute five solid missionary facts,—for example, “One hundred and ten times the letters of your Bible fall short of the numbers of the Chinese hosts,” — for each of eight months of the college year, and the others should note them, at the end of the year each volunteer would have four hundred facts at his command.

6. In some of the Irish Young Men's Christian Associations the Missionary Senate serves well to deepen interest. Each member is chosen as senator to represent some heathen country, and must be ready at any time to report on the condition of his constituents and the work among them. The interest which such a representative would feel in his people would be deep and growing and contagious.

7. Lastly, general subjects can be used from time to time to relieve the others and to gather broader views; for example, "What does the Bible say about Missions?" "The Comparative Need and Success of Home and Foreign Missions," "The Reflex Influence of Missions," "The Crisis in Missions," "Objections to being a Missionary." In one college a helpful meeting was held several years ago when the question "What is a 'Call'?" was discussed, with the help of several students who thought they were not "called."

If volunteers will observe due cautions, and will pray and think and talk to wise people about these things, they will find that no meeting can be made so interesting as a meeting for the study of missions.

If those who love the Lord and wish to see His last request obeyed do not strive while in college to awaken missionary interest, who will? This work clearly must be done. A few suggestions may lead some one in each college where this pamphlet may go to pray over this work, and to undertake it in His name.

1. The Band should provide for itself and for the students an adequate missionary literature, and see that it is read. (a) This literature should consist: (1) Of books. "The Evangelization of the World" for inspiration, the "Crisis of Missions" for a definite statement of the present missionary situation, "The London Missionary Conference Reports" and the "Missionary Year Book" for information, should be owned and read by each volunteer. They can all be secured for less than four dollars from F. H. Revell, 148 Madison Street, Chicago, Ill. There are many other books which ought to be read, but these at least. A missionary alcove in the college library should be secured and stocked. The Band might buy some books in common, to be circulated among the members and any others who might be helped by them.

(2) Of magazines. Each volunteer should subscribe for the "Missionary Review of the World," Funk & Wagnalls, 18 & 20 Astor Place, New York City. The price is one dollar a year to volunteers. Subscriptions at this rate should be sent to J. M. Sherwood, D.D., 35 McDonough Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. This Review is unsurpassed. "The Missionary Echo," twenty-five cents to volunteers, Willard Tract Depository, Toronto, Canada, is much smaller, but an excellent monthly. Besides these the various church magazines could be secured by the Band for a small price, if the matter were properly presented to the publishers of each. (3) Of tracts. These can be obtained from many of the Boards and from Mr. Walter J. Clark, 50 East 70th Street, New York City. The good that can be done by tracts is immeasurable. A tract, a word, a silent uplifted prayer,—these things work countless revolutions every year. It may be yours to use them. (b) Some members of each Band should lay it as a special burden on their hearts to have this literature read. Let them keep some of it in their rooms and give it to any one whom the Holy

Spirit indicates. The Band might well appoint a small committee to look after this and devise plans for having missionary information scattered. Much can be accomplished in this way if the committee will make it a personal, prayerful work.

2. A second duty is to teach students to give systematically and definitely. In this endeavor each institution of any size and prominence should have its own missionary in the field,—if possible a graduate of the institution,—supported by funds contributed by the college or seminary. This plan is perfectly satisfactory in denominational colleges, where the representative is sent out under the Board of that denomination. In other cases circumstances will govern the disposition to be made of the contributions. If a college cannot undertake the full support of a missionary, it may combine with some church or some other college or some seminary, and together they can raise the necessary amount. These funds in college can be handled by the Association treasurer or by a treasurer of the Band, but in either case the support of the missionary should be the work of the Association. About fifty institutions

have taken up this idea with great personal blessing to those who came thus to the help of the Lord. The general poverty of students is spoken of as a great barrier in the way of a more general adoption of this plan; but liberality best abounds in deep poverty. A clearer view of the uplifted Cross, and a more distinct hearing of the Savior's voice as He declared the redemptive work finished with the payment of His blood, would make every sacrifice seem too small, and would lead to the support of representatives in the foreign field by colleges which have hitherto deemed such action impossible.

3. Each volunteer must work for new volunteers. "Every disciple must be a discipler." Every missionary must be a maker of missionaries. Every Christian student, where it is possible, ought to leave behind him in college when he is graduated, in a class below him, another Christian student to take his place, who, humanly speaking, would not have been a Christian had it not been for his influence. So, also, every volunteer ought to leave behind him another volunteer won by the Lord through him. Such volunteers need not be "man-

persuaded missionaries." The Lord calls His missionaries by human agents. If this work is not done, the Band will soon die. If it is done, each volunteer will multiply his life, sometimes many fold. It is, perhaps, possible for each volunteer to do more for missions before he goes, in sending others and in deepening prayer, than he can ever do afterwards. Each Band should prayerfully, aggressively, incessantly strive to increase its numbers until the Lord says there are enough.

4. The Band should see that the world-wide gospel of the Christ is preached in every church, Sabbath School, Young People's Society, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Association, school, and college within its reach. Each of these should be led to support either its own missionary or its own native worker in the field. The missionary story should be told and the missionary appeal rung out, calling to loyalty to the King's command. This may be done (1) by little companies of two or three sent out to speak either of some special field or on some special phases of the need and work, or (2) by individuals alone. The work can be car-

ried on all through the college year, and by some of the volunteers in the summer vacation as well. In almost every Band some few can be found adapted to this work. (See pamphlet No. 5, Volunteer Series.) If they will go out trusting the Lord and honoring His promises, He will see that they will not lack anything. Let the importance of combined giving be constantly emphasized by these workers, showing, for example, how one hundred and thirty-five persons each giving ten cents a week will support a missionary. In this way the churches will be quickened, and the influence will react upon the Band. Of course, the other members of the Band will be much in prayer for those who go out to call God's people to this full obedience.

5. A record book should be kept by each Band. Each volunteer's name should be written at the top of a page and the page below left blank, that the record of his life may be put there. In years to come, if the Lord tarry, this book may be the most honorable alumni record preserved in each college. May it please God to fill some of these pages with such records of

humility and meekness as will best exalt Him, and with lives of which the Holy Spirit may say, what Jesus said of John, "He was a burning and a shining light." May each volunteer be like John in this also, that he shall make ready a highway for the footsteps of the coming King.

6. By preserving such a record each Band will be able to keep track of volunteers who have been graduated and are still in this country, as well as of those who have gone to the field. It is wise that the Band should keep in touch with those who are separated from the spirit of obedience to the last commission and are growing cold, suggesting to them that no revision can transform "go" into "stay." Or if volunteers after graduation are providentially prevented from going, it is well for the Band to know it, so as to avoid misunderstanding.

7. It is of importance that all facts concerning the Movement should be known by the Executive Committee, that they may pray over them and have full information regarding the Movement. Each Band should therefore keep in correspondence with the Secretary, Mr. Walter J. Clark, 50

East 70th Street, New York City. He should be furnished with all information about the work in each college. If any volunteers depart for the foreign field, or if any from any reason decide not to go, he should be informed. He will be glad also to send information of any kind to any Band or volunteer. Each Band should also know and pray for the Corresponding Member for the State in which the Band is located, and should help him as he strives to help others.

8. Correspondence with graduate volunteers, with the Executive Committee, and with the Corresponding Member, has been already suggested; but there is in this feature of the Band work yet larger promise of helpfulness. (1) Each volunteer should correspond at intervals with his preparatory school Association, his Sabbath School, or his Young People's Society. A letter from him to them would be regarded with great respect and listened to with unusual interest. (2) The general correspondence of the Band might be committed to several of its members. (a) *With other Bands.* In many a small college a cheerful, helpful, out-from-the-

shoulder spirited letter would do wonders in strengthening the work; and many a despondent Band in a large institution would be helped by a message of prayerful interest from a few hearts in some smaller place accustomed to cherish close associations with Jesus. The Secretary in New York will furnish addresses of Bands.

(b) *With the Boards and their missionaries in the field.* The Boards will cheerfully furnish information of any kind within their power. One feature of this correspondence should be the offering of his service to his Board by each volunteer. He might do this several years before his preparation is over, in order that he might have in his last years here the advantage of the longer experience and riper judgment of the Board. The letters from missionaries, especially from the college's own missionary, if it have one, will help greatly to make plainer and clearer and more plaintive the great appealing voice of a world dying without the knowledge of His name.

9. As many volunteers as possible should go to some one of the summer schools. There is no other equally great opportunity for feeling the pulse of the Christian

church, and for coming in contact with the missionary spirit and missionary men, nor any other so open for influencing the college men of this generation to catch the holy inspiration of a purpose to preach the Cross and Him who hung upon it to every soul before our generation is gone. Northfield, especially, is not only practically the original birth-place of the Movement, but it is the place where every summer it is born again.

10. Those students whom we can hardly hope ever to see upon the foreign field must nevertheless be interested. Into their hands will come the privilege of giving to the Lord for this work. They should have the joy of liberal and cheerful giving. It is of the greatest importance that those men, especially, who are to compose the coming ministry of this land should be familiar and fully in sympathy with the purpose of evangelizing the whole world. These ends can be attained: (1) By public missionary meetings, as the regular monthly Association meeting in college, the missionary meeting in the theological seminary, and perhaps an annual public meeting of the Band to which all are invited. (2) By

private meetings in rooms, where a few can talk familiarly about these things. (3) By inviting students personally to specially interesting meetings of the Band. (4) By giving them attractive missionary literature. (5) By personal conversation, displacing probably some other theme easily spared. (6) By private and united prayer, picking out certain men, and, unknown to them, laying their lives down at the feet of the Majesty on High. Would it not mightily delight the Master if in such work by every Band a fire were kindled whose light should not only brighten the circle just about it, but also pierce the thick pall of darkness and fling its radiance round the world?

While these suggestions have been put with special reference to the conditions prevailing in colleges, because college students compose so large a part of the Volunteer Movement, most of them apply equally to the work in theological seminaries and other institutions. Following these lines of work each volunteer will become a more intelligent and devoted servant. He will understand fully the purpose and character of the Movement of which he is a part, and will be ready to

correct any misrepresentations and misapprehensions often so prevalent in many places. So understanding it, he will strive to keep it very humble, very lowly, very quiet at the Lord's feet, content to glory only in the Cross of his Lord Jesus Christ. Working out in its own conditions and circumstances as many of these suggestions as can be made practical with it, each Band will conceive its functions as being largely those of an enlarged missionary committee, being indeed in a true sense an extension of that committee and a help to it; and not this only, but more also, because of the associated life purpose which binds and maintains the Band.

Lastly, each Band should be an infant class, and all these infant classes should form an infant school, and sit down before Him who is the Great Teacher of prayer. Here in the school of prayer we must learn to pray, for we know not how to pray as we ought. Let each Band select a field, obtain from the workers the names of all the converts and any others, divide these names among the members, and daily lay them all before our Lord. We may not be able properly to pronounce the names of these

poor ones, but He knows. The noon hour was long ago selected as the volunteers' hour of prayer. Each volunteer who gives that hour, or a part of it, to prayer, will be helped by the assurance that from many hearts at that same time a large volume of prayer is going up for the special objects which the volunteers desire in common. May the coming year see the Volunteer Bands so baptized with the spirit of prayer and supplication that from the secret place of his communion each volunteer may come down with a face shining as the face of Moses shone, and with a life which shall delight to do the will of God even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

DATE DUE

4/20/72

